

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

A few days ago, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, I recalled once again the words our Father addressed to us on 14 September 1969, at the end of the blessing with the *Lignum Crucis*. On that occasion he listed, one by one, the reasons we have for loving the Cross. As the final reason, he told us that the Cross will always be our travelling companion; we meet it personally in various ways and in different circumstances.

Therefore it is very good to enkindle, in ever new ways, our faith in the effectiveness of our union with Jesus' Cross. We can bring to mind Saint Paul's words: "In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (*Col 1:24*).

We know that, in fact, nothing is lacking from the immeasurable effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice. But in his Providence (which exceeds our understanding), God himself wants us to take part in applying this effectiveness. This is possible because he has made us sharers in Jesus' filiation to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit: "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (*Rom 8:17*).

External signs are often helpful for us. In this regard, as Pope Francis has sometimes remarked, the crucifixes we have near us, in our workplace, at home, and in other places are an invitation to unite ourselves to Our Lord.

Accompanying Our Lady beside the Cross will help our hearts learn how to "read from the book that is Christ crucified, in order to be filled with peace, joy and desires for holiness" (Saint Josemaría, Meditation, 15 September 1970).

Your Father blesses you with all his affection,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leonardo". The script is cursive and fluid.

Rome, 20 September 2021